

To: Neighbourhoods and City Development

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Date: 18/10/12

Subject: Essential Evidence on a page: No 90 Assessing the evidence to assist planners

Top line: Employing multiple strategies is important in promoting walking and cycling. However, a series of misconceptions on what works, need addressing.

It has been claimed that there is a common misunderstandings about walking and cycling such as a tendency to assume that interventions will have larger effects than the literature confirms. One comprehensive summary outlined the low hanging fruit in terms of interventions, policies and programmes that seem promising but have not been evaluated sufficiently, and where research findings contradict common assumptions.¹

Table 1. Summary matrix showing the efficacy of different categories of policy levels. (Adapted from Krizek *et al.*, 2009a)

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Increasing Walking</i>	<i>Increasing Cycling</i>
Community Design	High	Medium
Infrastructure Availability	Medium for adults; High for children	High
Infrastructure of High Quality (e.g., wide, tree-lined footpaths throughout)	Low	Medium
Programs (campaigns, education, and marketing)	Insufficient robust evaluations	Insufficient robust evaluations
Pricing and Convenience	Medium	Low
Combined Strategies	High	High

The review drew out 8 conclusions about common misunderstandings:

1. Walking and cycling, while sharing a number of commonalities, are different enough activities to warrant separate consideration.
2. Walking and cycling are understudied. Effects of proposed interventions are often overestimated.
3. Some populations respond better to education or infrastructure interventions eg those on low incomes are sensitive to pricing strategies, those who have recently moved may be open to travel change, as are people without driver's licences or less confident drivers.
4. Some interventions deserve more attention but have not been evaluated well enough to conclude that they really work eg education and social marketing may work, particularly for those motivated; bicycle loan programmes may be attractive to certain groups.
5. Some interventions and rules of thumb that may seem obvious are not backed up by evidence eg distance is important to pedestrians but many will walk further than the planning rule of thumb of 400 metres; pedestrian infrastructure such as footpaths matters to some users but not others; the findings on separated bicycle facilities are mixed.
6. There are certain necessary (if insufficient) preconditions for walking and cycling. For walking such preconditions include neighbourhood and larger scales of design (eg density and accessible destinations); for cycling, adequate infrastructure.
7. Combined strategies work to increase walking and cycling; i.e. it is very helpful to combine infrastructure, community design, pricing, and enforcement of traffic regulations.
8. Better information about non-motorized travel, collected at small geographical scales, would help planning for these modes.

¹ Forsyth, A., Krizek, K. 2010 Promoting walking and bicycling: Assessing the evidence to assist planners, *Built Environment*, 36(4): 429-446.